

From: Tom Johnson
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

When Microsoft gets it right their software is great: as a writer I worship Microsoft word and I feel the Microsoft Office Suite is excellent. I also prefer Microsoft's pocket program for the handheld PC's over Palm's. But Microsoft doesn't always produce the best software, and their browser is a great example.

I use Netscape Communicator because I feel it is more intuitive and user friendly than Internet Explorer. I have twice tried to convert to Internet Explorer - once for a YEAR! - and both times gone back to Netscape as my preferred browser. Admittedly Internet Explorer is at this point as good a browser as Netscape's, but only because Microsoft has been forced to equal the competition they squashed.

I recently was forced to install Internet Explorer's latest version into my OS in order to install Microsoft Outlook 2000, which is necessary to have installed in order to sync my Journada 520 handheld with my PC. Now how insidious is that? Microsoft Outlook 2000 is a SEPARATE program from Internet Explorer: at least it's sold that way - it is NOT BUNDLED with Internet Explorer. When I installed the upgraded Internet Explorer it converted all my files saved in Netscape to Internet Explorer files! Thanks a lot! Since I downloaded the I.E. upgrade for free, and it looked pretty good, I actually tried it for awhile. Without going into the details of the various frustrations I ran into with it, suffice it to say I went back to Netscape Communicator within a week.

User preference aside, another reason I prefer Netscape is the security issue: because it is NOT integrated with the windows system my OS is less susceptible to attack from viruses transmitted over the internet.

My personal preference would be for there to be a stripped down, and cheaper, Windows OS available to which I, and computer manufacturers, could add the software they liked: Microsoft's OR a competitor's. This is the only way I can imagine innovation sparked by competition can continue in software. If Microsoft wants to offer their "souped up" system with everything bundled in - fine - but I think it would be surprising how many consumers would opt for the "stripped down" alternative if it was available.

Microsoft's monopolistic practices must be stopped, and in my opinion they should pay compensation to Netscape for the business they stole by giving away their inferior product as an alternative in order to kill their competition. Their intent is so transparent it's ridiculous. I wish you the best of luck in trying to craft an equitable solution which will result in the return to true free enterprise competition in the digital world.

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